(b) if so, the *modus-operandi* discussed between the member countries to run the said proposed Airline?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) The proposal for setting up an airline jointly run by Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand has been initiated by the Thai Government. No details have been worked out so far.

Linking of Bangalore-Pune N.H. to Bangalore-Chennai N.H.

890. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bangalore-Pune National Highway is being linked with Bangalore-Chennai National Highway;

(b) whether the State of Karnataka has urged the Union Government for assistance; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Two estimates amounting to Rs. 11.60 crores and Rs. 14.40 crores, with sharing on matching basis between Central Government and State Government have been approved; *i.e.* widening and improving existing single lane state road to double lane from Dobbespet on NH-4 with Devanahally on NH-7 and Attibele on NH-7 *via* Hoskote on NH-4, respectively.

[Translation]

Allotment of out-of-turn Gas Connections

891. SHRI VINAY KATIYAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have allotted any out-of-turn L.P.G. connections during the last six months;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the basis on which these connections were allotted?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. During the last six months 755 LPG connections were released on out-of-turn basis. These connections have been sanctioned to blind persons on the recommendations of various Associations/Organisations of the blind persons, individuals on their request, and recommendations from VIPs and public representatives including MPs and ex-MPs in urgent and deserving cases at the discretion of the Government.

[English]

Kerosene

892. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a large quantity of Kerosene is diverted to be sold through certain petrol pumps in Bombay;

(b) if so, whether the profits made through this kerosene diverted for adulteration purposes is distributed among the persons involved therein;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) There is no such information with the Government and Government does not have any information about the sharing of profits of such diverted kerosene among different persons.

However, a study made, about three years ago, by a consultancy agency, had indicated diversion of kerosene at different points particularly through wholesalers for the purpose of adulteration and sale in black market, etc. Central Government has taken a number of steps to check diversion and adulteration, and as retail distribution by whole-salers, where mostly diversion takes place, is the responsibility of State Governments. They have also been advised to rationalise the system of distribution and to plug loopholes to prevent diversion and adulteration.

Literacy Percentage in Rajasthan

893. COL. (RETD.) SONA RAM CHOUDHARY : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Literacy percentage of males & females in Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jalore districts of Western Rajasthan is the lowest in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Union Government have given large amount to Rajasthan Government for eradication of illiteracy;